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**The Directed Megaphone:  
A Theater Commander's Means to Communicate  
His Vision and Intent**

**A Monograph  
by  
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United States Marine Corps**



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**School of Advanced Military Studies  
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## Abstract

THE DIRECTED MEGAPHONE: A THEATER COMMANDER'S MEANS TO COMMUNICATE HIS VISION AND INTENT by Major Arthur J. Athens. USMC. 59 pages.

This monograph studies how a theater commander communicates his vision and intent throughout a complex, diverse, multilayered, and multicultural organization. The monograph first focuses on the theoretical underpinnings of communications in large organizations. This theoretical foundation is derived from military, management, and academic writings on the subject. Next, a model, based on this theory, is presented to illustrate the communication process for a theater commander. The model, entitled "the directed megaphone," captures the essence of theater-level communications. Then, the monograph analyzes a theater commander--Admiral Mountbatten in the South-East Asia Command during World War II--and his communication methods, to determine the fidelity of the directed megaphone model.

The monograph concludes that Admiral Mountbatten effectively used the directed megaphone to communicate his vision to a command operating in a most challenging theater of operations. The historic analysis demonstrates the essential requirement for a theater commander to have a communications strategy to analyze his command and its personalities, shape a message, and deliver the message by his words, actions, and character. The directed megaphone model provides a framework for further study of other theater commanders and a means for current commanders to create or review their communications strategy.

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## **Table of Contents**

Introduction.....	1
Research Methodology.....	2
Boundaries of the Research.....	3
 Theoretical Foundations.....	4
Military Theory.....	4
Management Theory.....	12
Communications Theory.....	15
 The Directed Megaphone Model.....	19
Genesis of the Model.....	19
Description of the Model.....	20
 Historical Analysis.....	23
Background to the Burma Campaign.....	23
Mountbatten's Preparation for Supreme Command.....	25
Mountbatten and the Directed Megaphone.....	27
 Conclusions and Implications.....	40
 Map A--Burma Theater of Operations.....	42
 Endnotes.....	43
 Bibliography.....	51

## **Introduction**

Frank Snyder, a faculty member at the U.S. Naval War College, writing in Principles of Command and Control, observed that commanders at every level find themselves concerned about three aspects of command and control:

1. Whether they will be informed of significant events that will effect their operations.
2. Whether they will be able to transform the information they receive into sensible and timely decisions.
3. Whether they can successfully communicate their decisions to effect the outcomes of these decisions.<sup>1</sup>

Though all three elements are essential when considering the operational level command and control process, this monograph focuses on a theater commander's third concern--insuring his decisions are communicated properly.

Snyder warned that this third facet of the command and control process "usually is taken for granted, but it should not be."<sup>2</sup> He went on to say, "Commanders are likely to presume that decisions clear in their own minds surely will be understood by subordinate commanders . . . But a decision made is not necessarily a decision faithfully communicated or clearly understood . . ."<sup>3</sup> As Napoleon once wrote to Prince Eugene, "It is not enough to give orders, they must be obeyed."<sup>4</sup>

This communications challenge is exacerbated in the combined arena. As FM 100-5, Operations, states, "Commanders of combined forces face team-building challenges not encountered by commanders of single-nation forces."<sup>5</sup> Retired General Perry Smith, writing in Taking Charge: A Practical Guide for Leaders, saw this communications

challenge in any large international organization as the leader must be "sensitive to cultural differences, national biases, antagonisms between and among national groups, [and] unusual administrative and bureaucratic processes . . . ."6 Success for the theater commander is impossible unless he can effectively provide a shared vision for his forces and communicate this vision throughout a complex, diverse, multilayered, and multicultural organization.

How then can a theater commander accomplish this monumental task? Do simple plans and written directives suffice? How does a theater commander create what Frank Snyder called a "shared understanding that makes communications effective"?7 This monograph's thesis is that a theater commander must have a communications strategy to analyze his command and its personalities, shape a message, and deliver the message by his words, actions, and character.

### **Research Methodology**

To address the issues outlined above, research first focused on the theoretical underpinnings of communications in large organizations. A study was made of military, business, and communications theory. Within the communications theory research, special attention was given to writings in the field of intercultural communications, as the multicultural makeup of combined organizations forms one of the most pressing challenges for the theater commander. Guided by this theoretical base, a model, called the "directed megaphone," was created in an attempt to visually describe the communications process for a theater commander. The



model was then analyzed in the light of a specific theater commander commanding combined forces during war--British Admiral Mountbatten and the South-East Asia Command (SEAC) in World War II.

It is important to note why Mountbatten and his theater were selected. General Albert Wedemeyer, Mountbatten's Deputy Chief of Staff, perhaps described the situation most poignantly:

The unique difficulties of coalition warfare and combined command were generally recognized. In the case of SEAC, those difficulties would be compounded by other factors, including the stresses of operating thousands of miles from bases of supply, in a theater of relatively low strategic priority, in disease-ridden lands of often hostile natives, abominable climate, and near-impossible terrain. To the inevitable tensions arising from distinctive national styles were added those rooted in divergent political goals. Service rivalries and personal antagonisms within and among the Allied camps presented further complications . . . .<sup>8</sup>

Mountbatten faced a Sisyphean task and still achieved decisive results in reconquering Burma for the Allies. His success in dealing with this situation makes it a worthy case study.

### **Boundaries of the Research**

This monograph confines itself to studying a theater commander's communication strategy in joint and combined operations. The research focuses on a theater commander operating at the head of a large, multilayered, multinational organization, attempting to communicate his decisions and vision to his subordinate forces.

Two caveats must be mentioned. First, as Martin van Creveld warned in Command in War, command cannot be understood in isolation. Focusing, therefore, on only one aspect of command is fraught with peril.<sup>9</sup> Nevertheless, to understand communications properly, we must temporarily focus on this one aspect of command at the expense of the rest, while remaining intellectually vigilant to not lose sight of how communications integrates with the other elements of command and control.

The second caveat comes from British historian Michael Howard who reminded historical researchers to study history in width, depth, and context.<sup>10</sup> To use, therefore, only one historical example to analyze and test a model is dangerous. A single commander and campaign were chosen to permit study in depth and context, at the expense of width (observing actions over a long historical period). The hope is to perform a thorough analysis of one situation to set the foundation for further study across many commanders and campaigns.

## **Theoretical Foundations**

### **Military Theory**

Many of the classical military theorists, Clausewitz for example, are generally mute regarding how commanders communicate to their forces. This silence might be attributed to the conditions of warfare they observed, where the commander had relatively positive control of forces and his ability to communicate a vision or intent was not as problematic as in modern warfare. Nevertheless, we can find other authors who address this subject from the military perspective. These

writings tend to focus on four areas--a commander's oratory skills, his theatric ability, his personal relationship and face-to-face interaction with subordinates, and his strength of will to communicate his message regardless of obstacles.

### **Oratory**

The importance of a commander's oratory skills goes as far back as Moses and Joshua in the Old Testament of The Bible where these two leaders exhort and encourage the Army of Israel to overcome their foes. For example, before the march on Jericho, Joshua told his gathered forces: "Prepare provisions for yourselves, for within three days you are to cross this Jordan [River], to go in to possess the land which the Lord your God is giving to you, to possess it." Joshua's leaders responded, "All that you have commanded us we will do, and wherever you send us we will go."<sup>11</sup> Joshua communicated his vision and intent, the army heard and understood, and the destruction of Jericho resulted.

Years later, the prolific conqueror Alexander the Great used speeches to motivate his forces and unite their efforts. As John Keegan wrote in The Mask of Command:

Whatever the means he employed to make himself understood. Alexander had grasped from the outset the imperative of prescription--the need of every commander to convey an impression of himself to his troops through words, to explain what he wants of them, to allay their fears, to arouse their hopes, and to bind their ambitions to his own.<sup>12</sup>

Niccolo Machiavelli, writing in the early 16th Century, was perhaps the first to write formally about the oratory skills needed by a commander. In The Art of War, Machiavelli stated, "... it is necessary that a general should be an orator as well as a soldier; for if

he does not know how to address himself to the whole army, he will sometimes find it is no easy task to mold it to his purposes."<sup>13</sup>

Baron de Jomini, writing in the mid-nineteenth century, also commented on a commander's need to speak and communicate:

[T]he general should do everything to electrify his own soldiers, and to impart to them the same enthusiasm which he endeavors to repress in his adversaries . . . Military eloquence is one means, and has been the subject of many a treatise. The proclamations of Napoleon and of Paskevitch, the addresses of the ancients to their soldiers . . . are models of their different kinds.<sup>14</sup>

Though Machiavelli and Jomini recognized the place of oral communications by the commander, none of them went beyond an initial statement about the subject, nor did they provide any detail about oratory methods. The only classical military theorist who apparently devoted a fair amount of space to the subject is Raimondo Montecuccoli. Montecuccoli (living from 1609 to 1680) was the chief founder and developer of the Austrian army and came to prominence during the Thirty Years War. His writings apparently influenced, among others, Frederick the Great, Napoleon, Scharnhorst, and Delbrück.<sup>15</sup> As John Keegan observed, "For all the importance of prescription, military literature is curiously deficient in discussion of how it should be done . . . in the modern world Raimondo Montecuccoli . . . is almost the only writer to have addressed the subject."<sup>16</sup> Because of Montecuccoli's unique writings, it is instructive to take a closer look at what he said.

Montecuccoli, in his book Concerning Battle, introduced his section on communications by saying:

The exhortation is when the general speaks publicly to his soldiers in order to urge them to demonstrate *virtu* and to infuse them with courage. Thus, full of ardor, they plunge into the struggle, the image of their leader still reflected in their eyes and sound of his voice still ringing in their ears.<sup>17</sup>

He then went on to explain the various methods the commander can use to address his forces--forming an informal circle around him as he speaks; riding amongst his forces, briefly chatting to the soldiers as he moves from place to place; or erecting some type of dais for the commander to stand up and talk to his army formally. Montecuccoli then spent eight pages providing suggestions on what to say to the soldiers. For example:

Captains can incite soldiers to fight well by indicting the necessity of battle . . . by depicting the justice of one's cause, by appealing to patriotism and love of the captain, and by evoking disdain for the enemy.<sup>18</sup>

Yet another way of making soldiers fight effectively is to impart confidence to them and fill them with good hope.<sup>19</sup>

If the army has been defeated at other times by the enemy, one can console it by stating that the earlier loss was for reasons that no longer hold true. . . .<sup>20</sup>

Montecuccoli concluded his thoughts on communication by saying, "In short, the captain must be everywhere. Some individuals he must exhort with hope of reward, others he must impress with fear of punishment. With everybody he must do something."<sup>21</sup>

Interestingly, the monograph's historical section will show how Admiral Mountbatten, while Supreme Commander for the South-East Asia Command, used many of Montecuccoli's prescriptions for communications.

## **Theatrics**

Besides declaring that speaking was necessary to bring military forces into harmony, some writers recognized that theatrics needed to complement the commander's oratory efforts. Keegan wrote that "theatricality was at the very heart of Alexander's style of leadership, as it perhaps must be of any leadership style."<sup>22</sup> Frederick the Great, in writing instructions to his generals, said, "The dissimulation of the general consists of the important art of hiding his thoughts. He should be constantly on the stage and should appear most tranquil when he is most occupied, for the whole army speculates on his looks, on his gestures, and on his mood."<sup>23</sup> Montecuccoli hinted at the importance of theatrics when he wrote that a commander's confidence is communicated by "his facial expression, his words, and his dress."<sup>24</sup>

Keegan went as far as saying, "Among the imperatives of command, that of speaking with all the arts of the actor and orator to the soldiers under his orders stands with the first."<sup>25</sup> Certainly commanders can take theatrics too far and come across as counterfeit, but when commanding large formations and attempting to communicate, a degree of theatrical talent helps.

## **Personal interaction/building relationships**

General Jacob L. Devers, former theater commander during World War II, wrote in a 1947 article entitled "Major Problems Confronting a Theater Commander in Combined Operations," that "[T]he first task of a Theater Commander in combined operations must be to establish complete harmony with and between the various personalities of the senior commanders of the services of the various nations under command."<sup>26</sup> Devers saw this as the crucial step in

solving the six major problems common to all combined theaters. Dwight D. Eisenhower, who also experienced these combined challenges, felt the way to achieve harmony was through personal friendships.<sup>27</sup> General Zeiner-Gundersen, former Norwegian Chief of Defense and Chairman of the NATO Military Committee, echoed Eisenhower's sentiments: "Being personally acquainted with those you control will prevent control from being misused. Trust is necessary, and it develops easier between those who know each other . . . ."<sup>28</sup>

The theater commander can only establish these personal relationships if he undertakes a close analysis of the people and personalities under his command. As Devers pointed out, "Not only must the commander know these peculiarities of his principal subordinates, he must thoroughly understand the method of approach which will secure from them their unstinted loyalty and cooperation in every endeavor."<sup>29</sup> Communication in combined operations starts at the personal level.

Even with these personal relationships established, practitioners of warfare have found that face-to-face communications throughout a campaign are needed. For example, Ulysses Grant conveyed orders face-to-face whenever possible, even though he had the technology to transmit them by telegraph.<sup>30</sup> J.F.C. Fuller, when analyzing the failings of generals during World War I, attributed much of the problem to lack of personal contact between commanders and their subordinates.<sup>31</sup> General Foss, former commanding general of the U.S. Army's Training and Doctrine Command, writing about command in Military Review, concluded, "Perhaps the most important thing to know about command is that it is personal . . . . The value of face-to-

face command cannot be stressed enough . . . ."<sup>32</sup> Finally, John Keegan, in The Mask of Command, succinctly and powerfully stated, "The first and greatest imperative of command is to be present in person."<sup>33</sup>

### **Strength of Will**

Another communications theme prevalent in military writings is that of the importance of a commander's willpower. Hans von Seeckt, Commander-in-Chief of the German army, post World War I, and the individual who reconstructed the German army after the War, stated:

The higher his rank, the greater the distance between him and the final executive and the greater the danger that the decision will lose energy and that his will will fail to agitate the remoter fibres of the military body. It is therefore the commander's great task to force his will so vigorously into the chosen channels that its pulsation will be perceptible in their uttermost ramifications.<sup>34</sup>

The commander, therefore, must be determined to overcome every possible impediment and pursue every possible avenue to communicate his vision and intent. The larger and more diverse the organization, the more true this becomes. As Mitchell Zais, in his article "Strategic Vision and Strength of Will: Imperatives for Theater Command," observed, the operational commander's vision "must be transferred down through many layers of military organization. This can be accomplished only if the theater commander possesses the necessary strength of will to overcome obstacles to the transmission of his vision and to dominate the wills of those who would obstruct its attainment."<sup>35</sup>



When the commander's forces engage the enemy, his determination to communicate his intent, provide direction, and inspire his troops will often make the difference between defeat and victory. Carl von Clausewitz eloquently described this command responsibility as follows: "As each man's strength gives out, as it no longer responds to the will, the inertia of the whole gradually comes to rest on the commander's will alone. The ardor of his spirit must rekindle the flame of purpose in all others; his inward fire must revive their hope."<sup>36</sup>

### **Friction**

A final aspect addressed in military theory that is directly applicable to communications is friction. Clausewitz defined friction as "the force that makes the apparently easy so difficult."<sup>37</sup> This abrasive nature of war continually makes its mark on military communications. General Zeiner-Gundersen would remind the theater commander that "[I]t is the interpretation that matters, not what you think you said. This is particularly important when considering orders to someone from another nation. Remember that [the] English [language] is not always a precise tool. It is so easily misinterpreted."<sup>38</sup>

### **Summary**

Military theory, therefore, provides some solid foundations upon which to build a communications model for a theater commander. Bringing the message across will take more than just issuing a directive or making a speech. Theater commanders must analyze their command and the personalities that comprise it and they must establish personal relationships, always looking for the

opportunity to present their communications face-to-face. Beyond whatever actual oration the theater commander delivers, he must have a flair for the dramatic and the strength of will to see his message through. Finally, the theater commander must be ever aware of friction's impact on every communication.

### **Management Theory**

Current management literature also recognizes the critical nature of communications in large organizations. Warren Bennis and Burt Nanus, writing in Leaders: The Strategies for Taking Charge, stated, "The management of meaning, mastery of communication, is inseparable from effective leadership."<sup>39</sup> Thomas Peters and Robert Waterman, after studying successful American companies and publishing their findings in In Search of Excellence, observed, "The intensity of communications is unmistakable in the excellent companies."<sup>40</sup> From management theorists' discussions of corporate visions, we find three themes that can help serve as part of the theater commander's communication model--how visions must be communicated constantly and using various means, how leaders must use persuasive skills to sell their vision, and how perhaps the most important part of delivering the message are the leader's actions and visible commitment to the vision.

#### **Communicating the vision continually and with variety**

The leaders Bennis and Nanus studied for their book all seemed to be "masters at selecting, synthesizing, and articulating an appropriate vision of the future."<sup>41</sup> The corporate leaders realized, however, they could not offer the vision in an initial package and

leave its destiny to chance. The vision had to be repeated often and in a variety of ways, including "adapting and modifying shared symbols that signal and reinforce the new vision."<sup>42</sup>

Thomas Peters, in his sequel to In Search of Excellence, entitled Thriving on Chaos, elaborated on the use of shared symbols to support the vision. Peters claimed, "People live, reason, and are moved by symbols and stories" and that "The best leaders . . . almost without exception and at every level, are master users of stories and symbols."<sup>43</sup> Symbols, stories, and metaphors help people visualize the vision a leader is trying to communicate.

#### Using persuasion to help "sell" the vision

Bennis and Nanus concluded that a vision will not be accepted by an organization through compulsion. A leader cannot force a vision upon a large organization. Establishing a vision is, as Bennis and Nanus, stated, "more an act of persuasion, of creating an enthusiastic and dedicated commitment to a vision because it is right for the times, right for the organization, and right for the people who are working on it."<sup>44</sup> The leader must therefore be a salesman, or as Peters and Waterman described him, "an evangelist . . . constantly preaching the 'truth,' not from [his] office but away from it--in the field."<sup>45</sup>

Peters and Waterman, in In Search of Excellence, introduced the concept Management by Wandering Around (MBWA), implying a leader's need to get out from the office and involve himself in informal exchanges throughout the organization.<sup>46</sup> Each interaction with a member of the company is an opportunity for feedback and further "discipling."

In conjunction with MBWA, Peters recommended a "three-to-five minute 'stump speech,' with many variations."<sup>47</sup> This speech's purpose was to drive home the corporate vision and continue to bring the organization on board. Admiral Mountbatten used the "stump speech" with great effect.

### **The leader is the vision**

Even with the most superb and well-developed vision for a large organization, the most articulate leader, and the most varied means of presentation, the organization will reject the message unless the leader's actions reflect and reinforce the vision. Peters said it this way--"In the end, the manager's minute-to-minute actions provide a living model of his or her strategic vision. 'Modeling,' the behavioral scientists tell us with rare accord, is the chief way people learn."<sup>48</sup> The leader must constantly personify the vision. This will only occur if the leader believes wholeheartedly in his message and communicates with his whole being. As Peters wrote, "The vision lives in the intensity of the leader, an intensity that itself draws in others."<sup>49</sup>

Roger Ailes, former Communications Director for President Ronald Reagan, wrote a book entitled You are the Message, describing how words are not the main means of communications. Ailes goes as far as saying that, "If you could master one element of personal communications that is more powerful than anything we've discussed, it is the quality of being likable."<sup>50</sup> Considering the thoughts of General Devers on the problems in combined operations, this ability to establish relationships, be approachable, and develop personal friendships is critical to success.

## **Summary**

The leader, therefore, armed with a viable vision must communicate his message consistently through actions, words, and symbols, circulate throughout his organization as the primary spokesman for the vision, and communicate with sincerity and intensity.

## **Communications Theory**

Communications theory provides the final elements to complete the theater commander's model. This section will start with the earliest writings on communications, describe the primary operative communication model, and then discuss the field of intercultural communications.

### **Origins of Communications Theory**

Specific writings on communications began in the 4th Century B.C. with Aristotle's classic work On Rhetoric. The need for an expository work on communications arose because of the emergence of democratic government in Greek cities, where citizens were expected to participate in government and present their views via public addresses.<sup>51</sup> Aristotle's treatise provides useful thoughts for the theater commander's model on persuasion and audience analysis.

Aristotle defined rhetoric as "an ability, in each [particular] case, to see the available means of persuasion."<sup>52</sup> Aristotle went on to say that persuasion depends on three elements:

*logos*-- The truth and logical validity of what is being argued.

*ethos*-- The speaker's success in conveying to the audience the perception that he or she can be trusted.

*pathos*-- The emotions that a speaker is able to awaken in an audience to accept the views advanced and act in accordance with them.<sup>53</sup>

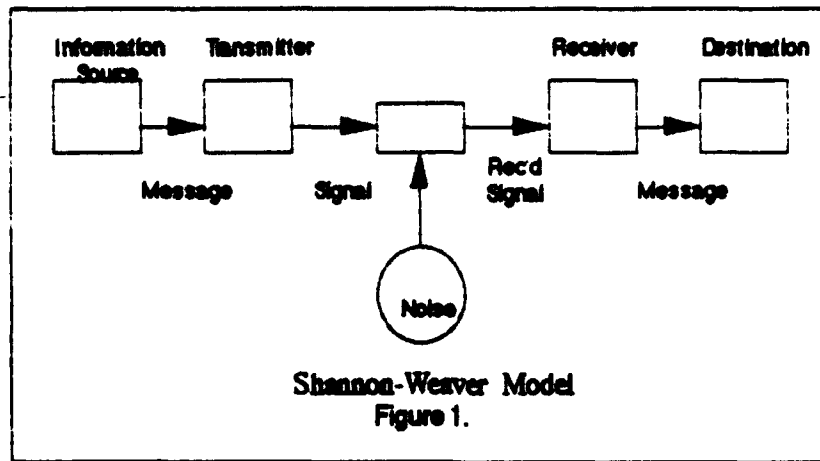
Aristotle's trinity consisted of what the speaker says (*logos*), how the speaker presents the message (*pathos*), and who the speaker is (*ethos*). Many experts in the field of communications identify *ethos* as the most important persuasive factor of the three.<sup>54</sup> The character of the man behind the message becomes all important.

Aristotle's other contribution that will directly relate to our model was his discussion of audience analysis. He devoted six chapters in On Rhetoric to how a speaker must analyze and adapt to the audience being addressed. These chapters emphasized that the speaker must understand the inner workings of the listener's mind so a message may be molded to increase reception and acceptance.

### Communications Models

From Aristotle's writings in the 4th Century B.C., few breakthroughs occurred in communications theory until 1949 when Claude Shannon and Warren Weaver from the Bell Laboratories developed a communications model bearing their name that would become the basis for all future studies of the communications process.

Shannon and Weaver developed their model to explain electronic data transmission primarily, but the simplicity and apparent applicability to human communications allowed the model to gain in popularity. Figure 1 is the basic block diagram for the Shannon-Weaver model.



The information source selects a message to send to a desired destination. For human communications, this information is the communicator, or more specifically, the mind of the communicator.

The transmitter changes the message into the signal that is sent over the communications channel from the transmitter to the receiver. For humans, the transmitter for oral speech would be the voice mechanism, the channel air, and the signal composed of sound pressures.

The receiver changes the transmitted signal back into a message, handing this message over to a destination. Again, in the human example, the receiver would be the ear, with the destination being the listener's brain.

Noise is those things added to the signal between the transmitter and the receiver that were not intended by the information source.<sup>55</sup>

Subsequent modifications to the model have additionally addressed the bi-directional nature of oral communications, nonverbal aspects of communications, the role of feedback, unintended communications, the importance of a message's meaning, the experiential base for the source and receiver, and the social context within which the communication occurred.<sup>56</sup> The Shannon-

Weaver model, nevertheless, remains today as the backbone of all communications models.

### **Intercultural Communications**

Because a theater commander will be working in some type of combined environment it is necessary to address a particular facet of communications--that of communicating across cultures. Intercultural communication is characterized by sources and receivers coming from different cultures; the greater the difference between these cultures, the greater the chance of miscommunication.<sup>57</sup> Interestingly, up to the past decade, most communications researchers have not addressed intercultural communications as a separate problem to study, but as Samovar, Porter, and Jain, writing in Understanding Intercultural Communications, recognized, "[H]uman communication is complex, multidimensional, and subject to a countless number of variations. When the component of culture is added to human communication the complexities and the problems facing any systematic study of the two is compounded greatly."<sup>58</sup>

Sensitivity to the complexities of intercultural communications is historically weak amongst Americans. As retired Air Force general Perry Smith observed in Taking Charge: A Practical Guide for Leaders, "Americans often become 'bulls in china shops' when they join an international organization, staff agency, or military unit."<sup>59</sup> This phenomenon can be attributed primarily to the tendency to project one's own mindset and frame of reference onto people from another culture. What then is the answer to succeeding in the international communications environment? An awareness of the differences is essential. Messages, both verbal and nonverbal, must take into



account the culture of the intended audience. As former State Department official Glen Fisher stated, "[O]ne must be one's own practical psychologist and cultural anthropologist."<sup>60</sup> The theater commander, therefore, must be an astute observer and analyst of the various personalities that surround him, and the cultural influences affecting their behavior.

### **Theory Summary**

Integrating the various theories from military, management, and communications writings, there appear to be five primary components of the communications process for the theater commander--The theater commander himself, the message he desires to send to his command, various audiences to receive this message, various methods to deliver the message, and barriers that inhibit the proper receipt of the message. The next section, describing the directed megaphone model, will delve into each of these components in detail.

## **The Directed Megaphone Model**

### **Genesis of the Model**

As David Campbell and Dale Level related in their Journal of Business Communication article "A Black Box Model of Communications," models are "simplifying devices meant to reduce the real world to manageable proportions."<sup>61</sup> Additionally, they pointed out that "because the modeler is selective as to what should be included in the model, any model is a partial representation of a small

piece of reality."<sup>62</sup> The directed megaphone model fits these descriptions in that it attempts to simplify and describe a complex process to be used as a departure point for future research and thought.

The inspiration for the model is taken from Martin van Creveld's directed telescope model presented in his book Command in War. Van Creveld described his directed telescope as a commander's tool:

... which he can direct, at will, at any part of the enemy's forces, the terrain, or his own army in order to bring in information that is not only less structured than that passed on by the normal channels but also tailored to meet his momentary (and specific) needs.<sup>63</sup>

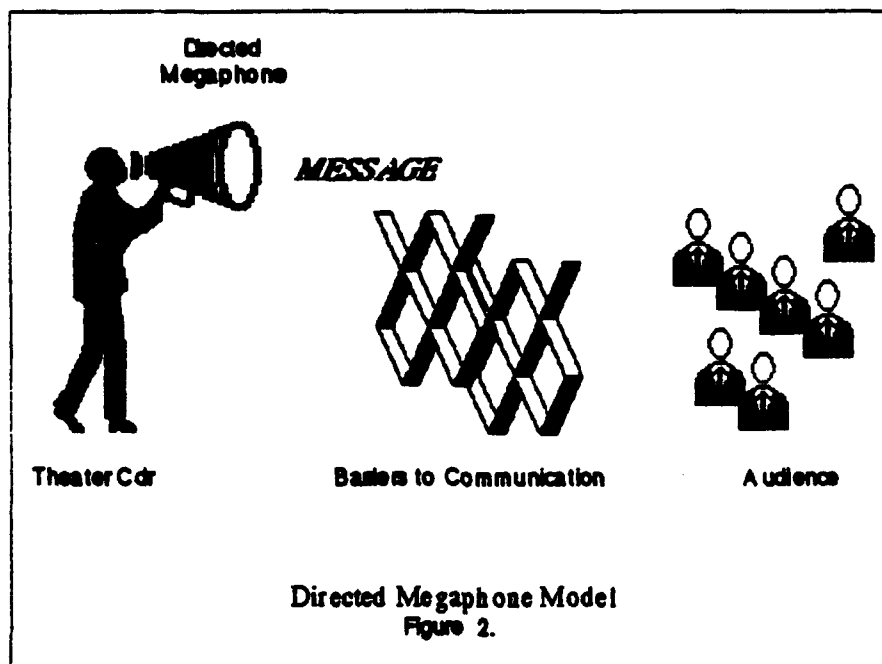
Van Creveld went on to show how Napoleon and other commanders used special staff officers as directed telescopes to "see" the battlefield.

Though there is some mention of the directed telescopes being used by commanders to help issue orders and explain intent, their role in this arena was restricted and normally met with resistance and limited success.<sup>64</sup> It seemed from a study of the directed telescope, there was a need for a similar metaphor to explain how a high level commander communicated his vision and intent to subordinate forces--thus, the birth of the directed megaphone model.

### **Description of the Model**

Figure 2 provides a visual representation of the model. The components of the model are those introduced in the theory section--the theater commander, the message, the megaphone or all those

aspects associated with the message's transmission, the intended audience, and the barriers to the communication. Each element will be discussed in turn.



Theater Commander--This is the person behind the vision. He creates the vision for the command, both an initial vision and updated intents as a campaign unfolds. He analyzes the various audiences associated with his theater. He wields the megaphone and decides when, where, and how he will use the megaphone. The theater commander must have oratory skills--both *logos* and *pathos*, as described by Aristotle. He must have a flair for the dramatic to embellish his message. The commander must "live" the vision on a day-to-day basis. His actions must reinforce the message. Perhaps most importantly, his character must be one of strength, integrity, and optimism.

Message--The message is the theater commander's vision and intent for his command. This vision should provide purpose,

motivation, and a defined endstate. In combined operations, it is often necessary to keep the message concise and simple. It is this message that must be attended to, comprehended, accepted and acted upon by the audience to which the megaphone is directed.

**Megaphone**--The megaphone represents all aspects of the commander's transmission of the message. The megaphone incorporates the technology used and the location, format, timing, and environment for the communication. The commander will direct this megaphone at one or more elements of the overall audience at any given time. The megaphone then attempts to amplify the commander's actions or words to achieve the desired result.

**Audience**--The theater commander needs to get his message across to his subordinate commanders, supporting commanders, immediate staff, and higher headquarters. Additionally, the theater commander's message should permeate the entire organization down to the lowest levels. Sometimes, the commander's audience will include the homefront, and even the enemy and their populace. The audience for the theater commander will be, almost without exception, multinational.

**Barriers to Communication**--The theater commander must be ever mindful of the communication obstacles that will stand between him and his audience. These barriers include noise (both literal and figurative), cultural and language differences, difficult personalities, prejudices, resistance to change, a deeply-layered organization, limitations in the audience's capacity to receive messages, unstated assumptions, and lack of proper communication facilities. A theater commander can overcome these barriers only through an aggressive

and thorough analysis of the situation, a well-crafted message, actions reinforcing the message, a proper use of the megaphone, and determination.

The next section presents a historical analysis of Admiral Mountbatten using the directed megaphone as the Commander of the South-East Asia Command (SEAC) during World War II to help test the fidelity of the model.

## **Historical Analysis**

This section is organized in three parts: the first, provides a brief background to the Burma campaign of 1943-45; the second, presents some biographical information on Admiral Mountbatten relevant to understanding his preparation for assuming the SEAC command; and the third, examines the directed megaphone model through the prism of Mountbatten's actions during his tenure as the theater commander.

### **Background to the Burma Campaign**

Japan attacked Pearl Harbor on 7 December 1941 and subsequently invaded the Philippines, Hong Kong, Thailand, and Malaya. Japan's entrance into Burma occurred on 16 December 1941. They used two highly-trained jungle divisions to sever British supply lines, isolate units, and destroy them piecemeal. The Japanese rapidly took Rangoon and by April 1942 had cut the Burma Road, used by the Allies to supply the Chinese, and split the British and Chinese forces. By May 1942, the Japanese firmly controlled Burma. British forces

had retreated to India and Chinese forces to the northern Burma-Chinese border. The Japanese had soundly defeated and humiliated the allied forces.<sup>65</sup>

With Japan in control of Burma, concern was raised over the vulnerability of India, the "Crown Jewel" of the British Empire, to invasion by sea or land and the possibility China would be unable to continue resisting the Japanese forces. The allies took two actions at this point: first, an air bridge was established to move supplies into China from India; and second, General Sir Archibald Wavell, the Commander-in-Chief in India was directed to plan an offensive in Burma. In October 1942, allied forces attacked into the Arakan, the southwest coastal area of Burma, bordering on the Bay of Bengal. This operation was a total failure and described as "the worst managed British military effort of the war."<sup>66</sup> This defeat devastatingly affected the already low morale of forces in theater.

The only other significant action occurring in the Burma theater before Mountbatten's arrival was that of the Chindits, a long-range patrolling force striking deep into Burma. Because of their actions, the Japanese began to consider an offensive in western Burma. The Japanese plan that eventually emerged was to strike in the Arakan in February of 1944 as a diversion and follow with a main attack in March against the Imphal-Kohima area. It was this situation Mountbatten would confront when he was appointed the Supreme Allied Commander for SEAC.

## **Mountbatten's Preparation for Supreme Command**

Admiral Mountbatten was born at Frogmore House, in the Home park of Windsor Castle 25 June 1900.<sup>67</sup> His mother, Princess Victoria, was the granddaughter of Queen Victoria and Mountbatten was therefore of royal blood. He also inherited a naval tradition, as his father was a captain in the British Navy, destined to become First Sea Lord.

As an aspirant naval officer, Mountbatten entered Osborne Naval Training College at the age of thirteen. Richard Hough, writing about Mountbatten's early schooling, remarked, "Osborne taught him no more useful lesson than it pays to make your mark firmly and at the outset; a lesson he applied in every command, from his first to Supreme Commander South-East Asia."<sup>68</sup> While attending Osborne, Mountbatten's father resigned as England's First Sea Lord at the outset of World War I due to false rumors of his allegiance to the Germans. This experience made an indelible mark in Mountbatten's mind and some have attributed his dogged determination to his desire to right this perceived wrong.<sup>69</sup>

To complete his education, Mountbatten attended the Royal Naval College at Dartmouth and Cambridge University. At Cambridge Mountbatten became involved in debating activities and there first "experienced the intoxication of feeling an audience stirred by his words."<sup>70</sup> Subsequent to his schooling, Mountbatten interestingly enough chose the signals branch as his specialty. It was this fascination with communications, in the broadest sense, that would serve him well in Burma.

His initial commands of the HMS Daring and HMS Wishart demonstrated his flair for developing memorable messages for his subordinates. Mountbatten would say, "Daring by name, and daring by nature--that's us" and "We have made every sea the highway of our daring."<sup>71</sup> When he transferred the entire ship's crew to the Wishart, he remarked to the crew, "We have just left behind a ship with a great name. We now got the only ship in the Royal Navy with an even greater name. Our new ship is named after the Almighty Himself, to whom we pray daily, 'Our Father wishart in heaven.'"<sup>72</sup>

His two most significant commands before SEAC were the HMS Kelly, that saw intensive action during World War II in the North Sea, the Norwegian Sea, and the Mediterranean, and immortalized in the movie In Which We Serve; and the Combined Operations Command, where Mountbatten was responsible for planning and conducting raids on the northern coast of Europe, as well as beginning preparations for a major invasion of France. In both commands, he was noted for his personal interaction with his subordinates and as the Chief of Combined Operations he began to perfect a "stump talk," a technique later to be used with great effect in South-East Asia.

In August of 1943, Mountbatten boarded the Queen Mary and began a voyage to Quebec with Winston Churchill to attend a conference to hammer out a strategy with President Roosevelt and the American Chiefs of Staff for the defeat of Germany and Japan. While at the conference, Churchill offered Mountbatten the job of Supreme Allied Commander, South-East Asia Command. On 25 August 1943 the appointment was made official. As Philip Ziegler wrote, "Mountbatten occasionally remarked that the best moment to take over a job was



when things were in their worst. His timing in the case of South-East Asia could hardly have been more perfect."<sup>73</sup>

### **Mountbatten and the Directed Megaphone**

With the background provided, this section will look at the five elements of the directed megaphone model and discuss their application in SEAC.

**Barriers to Communication.** The barriers introduced and discussed in the theoretical and model description sections were present in-force in Burma. To begin with, the two primary allies, Great Britain and the United States had differing strategic goals for the theater. The British desired to clear all of Burma as a stepping-stone to the more important interests of Malaya and Singapore. The Americans were interested in Burma only so far as it supported improved lines of communication with China to help China in their fight with Japan. The Americans felt this goal could be accomplished by securing areas in northern Burma alone.<sup>74</sup> Though Mountbatten worked directly for the British Chiefs of Staff, the influence of the Americans never waned. These divergent purposes challenged Mountbatten to communicate a coherent plan to his subordinate forces and bring harmony to the various allied commanders.

Mountbatten also faced an assemblage of difficult personalities from his deputy commander, General Joseph "Vinegar Joe" Stilwell, to the eccentric leader of clandestine operations, General Orde Charles Wingate, to his often ornery Chief of Staff, General Pownall, to the hesitant Land Component Commander General Giffard, to a jealous

Naval Component Commander, Admiral Somerville, to the unpredictable Generalissimo Chiang Kai-Shek.

Additionally, Mountbatten faced a combined organization described by Stilwell as a "Chinese puzzle" with the commanders "interwoven and mixed beyond recognition."<sup>75</sup> The Land Component Commander did not control the American or Chinese forces operating in Burma. The Air Component Commander only controlled British air forces in theater. The Naval Component Commander reported directly to the Admiralty in London and only to Mountbatten on matters regarding amphibious operations and direct support of land operations in South-East Asia. Even General George Marshall of the American Chiefs of Staff admitted the structure was "administratively unsound."<sup>76</sup>

In addition to these major stumbling blocks, there were language and cultural difficulties (even between the Americans and British), extremely limited resources, and an organization of over 1.1 million soldiers, sailors, and airmen.

The Message. Mountbatten incorporated his overall theater vision in what he called "the 3 M's." It was this message that Mountbatten needed to "sell" to his command.

Mountbatten began working on his grand design for SEAC before he left the Quebec conference. Mountbatten wrote that while in Canada he "drew up a chair, sat down, took a blank sheet of paper and began to write down all the things I would have to do."<sup>77</sup> Additionally, Mountbatten talked to individuals in England, before his departure to the theater, who were familiar with the Burma situation. From his own reflections and these conversations Mountbatten

determined his initial message to his forces would be summarized with three M's--~~m~~orale, ~~m~~onsoon, and ~~m~~alaria.

Mountbatten saw morale as the most important of the three. He knew he needed to lift the spirits of a defeated force, to convince them the Japanese were not invincible, and to persuade them victory was not only possible, but that it would occur. Mountbatten knew defeating the Japanese in an initial encounter was necessary to solidify the command.<sup>78</sup> The SEAC commander also perceived the time was ripe to "fight on as hard in the monsoon as in the dry weather; and gain the advantage which comes to the side that perseveres when the other is expecting both sides will stop."<sup>79</sup> The monsoons hit Burma from mid-May to mid-October and caused the country to turn into an almost impenetrable quagmire, but Mountbatten had confidence his troops could continue on in these difficult conditions and surprise the Japanese. Finally, Mountbatten had studied the casualty figures and perceived that tropical diseases, particularly malaria, were devastating the forces in his theater. Again, Mountbatten felt if this situation was reversed it would encourage his fighting forces and increase his combat effectiveness. Though not included with the three M's, but eventually irrevocably intertwined with all three, were Mountbatten's emphasis and reliance on air transport and supply. This final factor became part of his grand message.

The Audience. Before turning to Mountbatten himself and the directed megaphone's use, it is helpful to examine the elements of Mountbatten's audience. His audience was diverse, multicultural, separated by great distances, and ranged from the Indian mechanics

who worked on airplanes to a three-star U.S. Army general.

Mountbatten's Chief of Staff, General Henry Pownall, related that "Mountbatten took the view that it was his duty to establish friendly relations with all his allies and subordinates," and that "one of Mountbatten's most valuable attributes in SEA [was] that he was able to cooperate amicably with all sorts and conditions of men."<sup>80</sup> Two examples suffice to demonstrate Mountbatten's analysis and sensitivity to his audience.

In the first case, Mountbatten's research in England before arriving in theater indicated that one of his first priorities would be to establish cordial relations with Chiang Kai-Shek and improve Chinese-British relationships. Seventeen days after arriving in India, Mountbatten went to see the "Generallisimo." Mountbatten recalled the meeting:

I began my remarks to the Generallisimo by telling him that I had come straight on out without even waiting for my staff to arrive in Delhi, in order to make his acquaintance, and in particular to seek his advice. I pointed out what a young and inexperienced officer I was to have been given such a high post, but that if I could lean on the wisdom and experience of the best and most renowned soldier of our generation I should face the future with far greater confidence.<sup>81</sup>

Mountbatten not only won Chiang Kai-Shek over, but also his influential wife Madame Chiang, who would prove to be an important ally.

Mountbatten's other potential headache was his deputy, Lieutenant General Joseph Stilwell. Philip Ziegler wrote of Stilwell, "[He] despised every race except his own, and most Americans as well."<sup>82</sup> Stilwell was also 17 years older than Mountbatten and held a

permanent rank of three-star general as compared to Mountbatten's permanent rank of Navy captain. Mountbatten undaunted, believed he could develop a working relationship with "Vinegar Joe."

Mountbatten's initial visit to Chiang Kai-Shek had a dual purpose--not only did he want to meet Chiang face-to-face, but also interact with Stilwell who was in China at the time. When Mountbatten arrived to visit Chiang Kai-Shek he was told Stilwell was going to be fired by the Generallissimo. Mountbatten strode right into the middle of the controversy and forcefully communicated to Chiang Kai-Shek his unwavering support for Stilwell, a man he had never met. Chiang Kai-Shek retained Stilwell and Mountbatten's boldness helped establish rapport with Stilwell. The crusty American general told Mountbatten, "Admiral, I like working with you, you are the only Britisher I have met who wants to fight."<sup>83</sup> Stilwell related to others that Mountbatten was "a good egg, full of enthusiasm and also of disgust with inertia and conservatism."<sup>84</sup>

Mountbatten read his various audiences well and successfully delivered his message to all of them. The audience, however, for which he would have the most dramatic impact was the fighting men of his command. He escaped from his desk whenever he could to go to the far reaches of command to direct his megaphone at the individuals who would eventually win Burma for the allies.

The Directed Megaphone. The theater commander directs the megaphone at elements of his audience to get the message across. The megaphone's use determines when the message is given, where the message is given, and how the message is given. An effective theater commander will use various combinations to communicate a consistent

vision. Mountbatten used symbols, written products, both formal and informal meetings, and electronic transmissions to deliver his message. Each will be addressed briefly in turn.

When Mountbatten considered the theater's morale problem he felt the command needed a "sense of identity."<sup>35</sup> He took it upon himself to design an emblem to communicate an image of overcoming the Japanese. His design, with a Phoenix as the prominent graphic, symbolizing renascent strength and a command rising from defeat to victory, caught on and began to appear everywhere--on uniforms, official correspondence, and vehicles. As the management theorists expressed, symbols are a powerful communications medium.

In addition to this symbol, Mountbatten wanted his headquarters to communicate a certain image to his forces. Mountbatten wrote in his diary, "I am anxious to try and get an alert air of bustle about my headquarters, the same as we had at Combined Operations headquarters."<sup>36</sup> Mountbatten desired the word to get out that SEAC headquarters was working hard to support the forces that would eventually have to engage and defeat the enemy. He must have been successful for General Pownall recorded in his diary in November of 1943, "The pace is pretty hot for Mountbatten gives neither himself, nor his staff, time for relaxation."<sup>37</sup> Not only did Mountbatten create an air of efficiency and productivity, but he eventually moved the SEAC Headquarters from India to Kandy, Ceylon. As Raymond Callahan, writing about the Burma campaign, pointed out, this move helped to leave behind "India command's legacy of defeat."<sup>38</sup>

Besides symbols, Mountbatten used the printed word to direct communications to his command and the homefront. Aside from numerous written directives that communicated plans, policies, and methods, Mountbatten secured the services of Frank Owen, a successful newspaper editor from England, to create and print a daily newspaper, entitled SEAC.<sup>89</sup> This newspaper was extremely well-received throughout the command and helped to provide news, encouragement, and messages from the commander. Mountbatten also created a position on his staff, Deputy Chief of Staff in Charge of Information, and assigned a retired Air Chief Marshall Philip Joubert to the billet. Mountbatten directed Joubert to tell the rest of the world what SEAC was doing and he did this through news releases provided to the press of various nations.

Perhaps Mountbatten's favorite megaphone was the "stump talk" that he became known for throughout SEAC. Vice-Admiral Sir Ronald Brockman, Mountbatten's Secretary, recalled:

[I]n those early days Lord Mountbatten spent very little time in Headquarters and that he was round the Command to all the Army and Air Force units possible and to such of the Navy as he was allowed to get at, and with his tremendous enthusiasm and drive he was, in spite of all the difficulties, able to keep everyone on the top line and confident that something was going to happen.<sup>90</sup>

His technique when visiting a unit was to talk first to the officers individually while they were in formation. As he approached each man he would talk to them about their background and their families and then provide them with a few bits of inspiration. Mountbatten's incredible memory allowed him to remember the details about the majority of officers he met and recall the details months later when

presenting awards or visiting the same unit in combat.<sup>91</sup> After speaking to the officers, he would call the rest of the unit around him, someone would provide him with a box to stand on, and he would present a "short, sharp, confidently delivered, confidence-inspiring" talk.<sup>92</sup> Mountbatten typically began his talk as follows:

Gather round so you can all here me . . . Right. Now, I understand people think you're the Forgotten Army. I understand you all talk about yourselves as the Forgotten Army on the Forgotten Front. I've come here to tell you you're wrong. You're not the Forgotten Army on the Forgotten Front. No, make no mistake about it. Nobody's ever heard of you!

Mountbatten's timing was perfect, the troops would laugh, and then listen intently to his follow-on words:

Now the picture is changing. People are hearing about us, and they're going to hear more. From now on they'll be hearing about our victories . . . There's going to be no more retreating, and you'll be supplied from the air--and that's my job.<sup>93</sup>

Mountbatten would then proceed to explain that the Japanese were not invincible, that SEAC forces could defeat them, that fighting would go on through the monsoon, and that the Allies would exploit their superior medical skills.<sup>94</sup>

These "stump talks" were given throughout the command and his schedule was exhausting. Mountbatten recorded in his diary on 13 January 1944, for example: "During these four days I had given the following number of talks: Monday--7, Tuesday--10, Wednesday--16, Thursday--10. A total of 43 talks in 4 days; equivalent of 14 hours talking."<sup>95</sup> It is also of note that these visits were not just to English-speaking units, but his travels took him to Indian, African, Dutch, and Chinese units as well.



Mountbatten also directed the megaphone on a more personal basis, particularly to his staff and subordinate commanders. His diary records the many meetings he held with the component commanders and key air and ground commanders at the corps, group, and division level. He consistently forestalled problems by going to a commander's headquarters, gathering the appropriate individuals to discuss a specific issue, and ironing out whatever problems stood in the way of accomplishing the mission. Because of this constant communication, Mountbatten's subordinates were always aware of the latest plans being considered and Mountbatten's long-range objectives.

Finally, Mountbatten used electronic transmissions to help send his messages. He established a daily Forces Programme broadcast to provide information for his troops; he stayed in touch with his key subordinates, even when he was travelling so frequently, by using a specially configured Dakota (C-47) aircraft equipped as a mobile wireless and cypher station; and he used psychological operations broadcasts against the Japanese and to muster support from the local Burmese population.<sup>96</sup>

This section demonstrates the incredible diversity used by Mountbatten to deliver his vision and intent to his forces. He reinforced each of his primary messages in numerous ways.

The Theater Commander. Lastly, we turn to the theater commander and his place in the model. The theater commander provides the vision and intent, but just as important, his character and abilities (who he is) and his actions (what he does) become key elements in the overall communications process.

The theorists agreed that the communicator must be a person with oratory skills. Mountbatten's biographer, Richard Hough, described Mountbatten's skill as follows:

His power to lift spirits, to bring out the best in people, has been experienced by thousands and is undeniable. The aura of greatness around him never failed to inspire, and in his presence, one could physically feel the adrenaline rising when he became enthused or determined.<sup>97</sup>

Mountbatten could connect with people, whether standing before the regal ruler of a nation or a platoon of wet and cold soldiers.

His enthusiasm and speaking ability were matched by his likability, a trait Roger Ailes in You are the Message considered essential for successful communications. Field Marshal Slim, writing in Defeat into Victory, stated unequivocally, "From the very start, no one could fail to like the Supreme Commander--even Stilwell, in a picturesque phrase, once admitted that to me. . ."<sup>98</sup>

Mountbatten also possessed tenacity and the willpower to communicate his vision, regardless of the obstacles. Philip Ziegler observed, "What he could do with superlative aplomb was to identify the object at which he was aiming, select the method which was most likely to achieve it, and force it through to its conclusion."<sup>99</sup> General Pownall, not always complimentary of Mountbatten, could not fail to see Mountbatten's strength of character:

His strongest point is his resilience. Disappointment he has of course felt. But whatever his private feelings, he has never failed to 'come again' and to conceal from others the fact that he was saddened. The capacity to 'come again' is a most necessary trait in a commander in war, and he has it in full measure.<sup>100</sup>

A theater commander's character helps communicate the message, and so do his actions--as the old saw goes, "Actions speak louder than words." The management theorists were clear that a vision can only be successfully communicated when the leader's daily actions harmonized with the stated vision. In analyzing Mountbatten, we will examine two aspects of his 3 M message, morale and medical, and see how his actions dramatically reinforced the vision he was attempting to communicate.

Mountbatten always saw that the initial contacts with the Japanese would be critical in reinstating the command's morale. In February of 1944, the Japanese would put SEAC to its first test. As explained in the historical background section, this February attack by the Japanese into the Arakan Peninsula was part of a two phased offensive action. The Japanese aim was to attack the allies' 7th Division in the rear to isolate them, while keeping the 5th Division occupied in the North until the Japanese main force could destroy the 7th and finally turn on the 5th. The Japanese expected a rapid victory and that they would meet their logistical needs from captured supplies.<sup>101</sup> Mountbatten considered this Arakan battle "of the utmost importance . . . as it is a battle of morale. In importance it will rank with El Alamein."<sup>102</sup>

Mountbatten's instruction to his forces in the Arakan was, "Hold on and you will make history."<sup>103</sup> Though the 7th Division was cutoff, he wanted them to remain and fight. Now Mountbatten had to come through with his commitment to supply these forces by air, as well as provide reinforcements. The problem became the shortage of aircraft. Aircraft in-theater were committed to flying supplies to China and, at

the time of this fight in the Arakan, to fly Major General Wingate's long range penetration to their prearranged positions and then supply them. Mountbatten boldly went forward to the Combined Chiefs of Staff and requested permission to divert aircraft off the "Hump Route" to China and use them in the Arakan. When considering the Americans penchant for emphasizing support for China, Mountbatten needed to be very convincing. He was, the planes were diverted, and the Japanese were defeated. Mountbatten wrote in his report following the battle, we won the first battle in the Arakan because:

... we were able to supply the troops by air, *as they had been promised*, which had given them the certainty that they would eventually be reinforced, and that the tide would turn in their favor ... For in this battle, what was virtually a new technique in warfare had been evolved, tried out and vindicated; and the myth of the 'Invincible Jap' was now exploded.<sup>104</sup>

Another example of Mountbatten's actions supporting his message of morale was during the battle for Imphal. In March 1944, even though defeated in the Arakan, the Japanese launched their second offensive towards the Imphal region where major allied lines of communication were located. The Japanese achieved immediate success and at a 13 March meeting, the 14th Army Commander, Lieutenant General Slim, who was fighting the battle, described the desperate situation and the need to receive reinforcements to prevent defeat. The unit available to reinforce Slim at this point was the 5th Division, currently located in the Arakan. The only way to bring their combat power to bear in time was to fly them in. Again, Mountbatten faced a shortage of transport aircraft. He also confronted an even greater time crisis than he faced in the Arakan. Mountbatten made the bold decision to divert, on his own authority, thirty Dakotas off the

"Hump Route" and place them under the Troop Carrier Command. After the fact, Mountbatten telegraphed the Combined Chiefs of Staff, stating that "unless I receive orders to the contrary before the 18th [of March], I would order thirty Dakotas off the 'Hump Route' for the immediate fly-in of 5th Indian Division."<sup>105</sup>

Mountbatten's risk paid off as the 5th Indian Division helped to stabilize the situation at Imphal and the Combined Chiefs eventually sent their approval. Lieutenant General Slim wrote in his memoirs how Mountbatten's efforts endeared him to Slim and had a major impact on the battle's outcome.<sup>106</sup> Mountbatten did not just talk about morale, he took actions to ensure his forces would achieve it.

In the same way that Mountbatten's actions backed his message on morale, so did his actions communicate his commitment to medical services. Mountbatten sensed, even before his arrival in India, the demoralizing effect poor medical attention and debilitating diseases were having upon the force. Early on he persuaded the Prime Minister to authorize the establishment of a Medical Advisory Division, staffed by the best British naval, army, air force, and U.S. Army doctors, all specialists in tropical diseases.<sup>107</sup> During his early visits throughout his command, he made a special effort to inspect every military hospital he could, "rebuking slovenliness or poor hygiene, noting deficiencies of staff or equipment and agitating to have them made good when he got back to his Headquarters."<sup>108</sup> Additionally, Mountbatten placed emphasis on making air transportation available for medical evacuations, preached good hygiene discipline throughout the theater, and used DDT extensively.

sprayed from both the air and on the ground to control the dangerous insects of the region.

### **Summary**

This section has presented the directed megaphone model in action. The historical analysis demonstrated how one theater commander examined his audience, the barriers to communication, and the various means available to communicate. The analysis then showed how he developed an inspiring vision, used the directed megaphone throughout the theater, and supported his vision with his character and actions. The result of this segment of Mountbatten's command was the recapture of Rangoon in May of 1945, the Japanese surrender of Burma, and the reestablishment of the Burma road.

### **Conclusions and Implications**

Two questions need to be addressed when making a final consideration of the directed megaphone model. The first question is: does this model have applicability today, particularly in a technological age much different from Mountbatten's? The second is, if it is applicable, for what purposes should the model be used?

In reference to the first question, Carl von Clausewitz, writing in the mid-nineteenth century, stated, "[E]very age has its own kind of war, its own limiting conditions, and its own peculiar preconceptions . . . It follows that the events of every age must be judged in the light of its own peculiarities."<sup>109</sup> Certainly we must be careful not to develop a model, test it against the events of war occurring fifty years ago, see its validity in that situation, and declare its universal

application. Caution is always advised. At the same time, two facts favor the model's relevance today. First, Ardant du Picq, writing in Battle Studies, astutely observed, "The art of war is subjected to many modifications by industrial and scientific progress. But one thing does not change, the heart of man."<sup>110</sup> Communication has been, and always will be, a matter of the heart. Mountbatten had to win men's hearts through his communications; the theater commander today must do no less. Second, the directed megaphone model is founded on theory--theories from the military, corporate, and academic sectors. A model based on well-established theory has staying power.

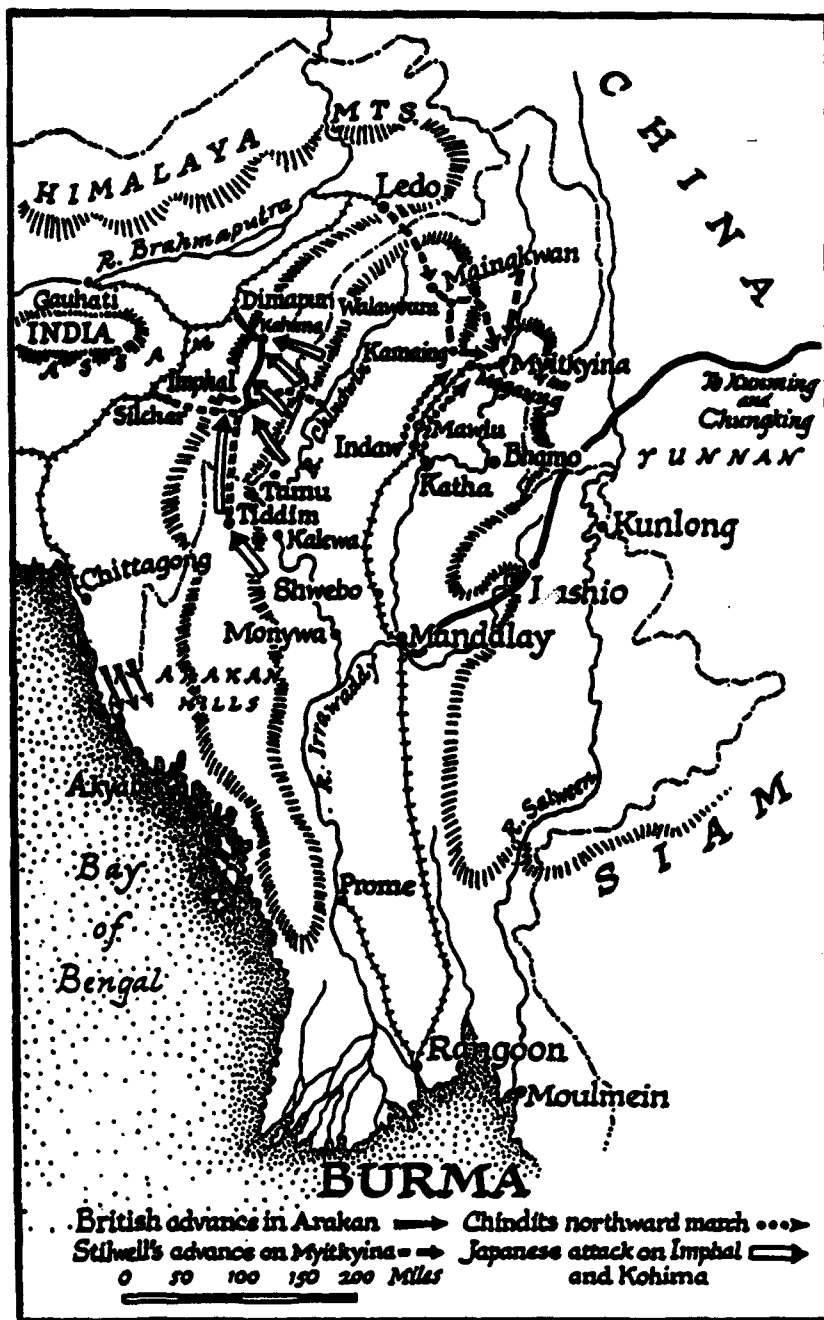
The second question involves the model's usefulness. It appears the model can achieve two things--first, it serves as a framework to study other commanders and their communications and second, the model can serve as a checklist, where a theater commander can go through each element of the model and evaluate his own situation, helping him to develop a communications strategy and plan of action.

How important is communication to success on the battlefield?

FM 22-103: Leadership and Command at Senior Levels states:

In the final analysis, leadership and command at senior levels is the art of reconciling competing demands according to priorities activated by a clearly formed vision, implemented by a clearly communicated intent, and enforced by the toughness to see matters through.<sup>111</sup>

The directed megaphone is one of the essential brushes needed for the operational artist to create a masterpiece.



**Map A**

**Burma Theater of Operations**

Taken from Winston S. Churchill, Closing the Ring

(Boston, Houghton Mifflin Co., 1951), 563.



## Endnotes

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- 6 Perry M. Smith, Taking Charge: A Practical Guide for Leaders (Washington, D.C.: National Defense University Press, 1986), 125.
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